

Conclusions of the Sub-regional workshop on land-use planning and industrial safety for Eastern Europe and the Caucasus

Chisinau, Republic of Moldova, 22-24 May 2019

Main Objectives

- Provide a platform for countries of Eastern Europe and the Caucasus to share their experiences and good practices in coordinating their land-use planning and industrial safety procedures and cooperation between the relevant experts for industrial accident prevention, including in a transboundary context
- Discuss challenges and opportunities for improved coordination and cooperation
- Improve the understanding and implementation of the following instruments, frameworks and guidance: UNECE Industrial Accidents Convention, with a particular focus on Article 7 on land-use planning and decisions on siting; the Geneva UN Charter on Sustainable Housing; the UN-HABITAT International Guidelines on Urban and Territorial Planning; other relevant legal instruments, such as the UNECE Convention on Environmental Assessment in a Transboundary Context and its Protocol on Strategic Environmental Assessment; and the UNECE Guidance on land-use planning, the siting of hazardous activities, and related safety aspects
- Raise awareness of the linkages to Agenda 2030 on Sustainable Development and its Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) and the Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction 2015 – 2030 in the context of land-use planning and industrial safety

Attendees and organizers

The sub-regional workshop brought together 37 experts in land-use planning, industrial safety and environmental assessment¹ from the beneficiary countries (Eastern Europe and the Caucasus: Armenia, Azerbaijan, Belarus, Georgia, the Republic of Moldova and Ukraine) as well as seven international experts from Belgium (Flanders), France, Kyrgyzstan, Netherlands, Norway and Serbia. Participants comprised representatives of national and regional authorities, the private sector, NGOs and academia. The Chair of the UNECE Industrial Accidents Convention also attended. The meeting was organized and serviced by UNECE secretariats to the UNECE Industrial Accidents Convention and the UNECE Committee on Urban Development, Housing and Land Management, in cooperation with the Ministry of Agriculture, Regional Development and Environment of the Republic of Moldova, with contributions by the government of Flanders (Belgium). The workshop was organized thanks to financing provided by the Ministry of the Ecological and Inclusive Transition of France.

Overview of the workshop

The workshop was held over two and a half days, comprised of four sessions of presentations, a panel discussion, a practical exercise, a video² and a site visit.³ In advance of the workshop, the different experts from each country liaised with each other and jointly prepared a presentation on behalf of their country, which signalled a positive step in improving collaboration across disciplines and building momentum in inter-institutional cooperation. The presentations and ensuing discussions enabled the country representatives and international experts to initiate

¹ Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA) and Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA)

² Produced by UNECE and Zoi Environment Network, available at: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=i3PjrBkNXOw> in English, and <https://vimeo.com/337694510> in Russian

³ For detailed workshop agenda, please consult <http://www.unece.org/index.php?id=50975>

communication on land-use planning and industrial safety, highlight progress made in various related fields, note the challenges faced, identify needs and agree on the possible ways forward for enhancing dialogue and cooperation in and among the countries of Eastern Europe and the Caucasus.

A practical exercise involving a role play helped the participants to understand and practice methods to ensure greater safety through cooperation between land-use planners, industrial safety experts, industry operators, port authorities, ministries, NGOs and other stakeholders, within and across borders. A group site visit provided insight into the operations of a hazardous industrial facility in Chisinau, the construction of which needed to take into account land-use planning and cooperation between the relevant authorities.

The workshop concluded with a summary of the identified needs and challenges of Eastern European and Caucasian countries that were revealed through the exchange of information and discussions at the workshop. The key outcomes of the sub-regional workshop are presented below.

Key outcomes of the subregional workshop:

Countries in Eastern Europe and the Caucasus face challenges with respect to integrating land-use planning and industrial safety procedures and sustaining coordination and cooperation between the relevant authorities, in relation to decision-making on land-use planning and the siting of hazardous industrial activities. To address these challenges, the participations agreed that:

- The collaborative efforts by the different experts of each country to prepare their joint presentations for this workshop was a positive step in improving coordination across disciplines. The participants agreed to continue to build this momentum by establishing **measures to ensure further inter-institutional coordination**, for example through:
 - The establishment of **inter-institutional coordination mechanisms** (such as Working Groups involving both land-use planning and industrial safety representatives)
 - The establishment or revision of **legislation that integrates land-use planning and industrial safety**, in line with relevant multilateral environmental agreements⁴
 - Making use of **available guidelines and policy documents**, such as the UNECE *Guidance on land-use planning, the siting of hazardous activities and related safety aspects*, the UN-HABITAT International Guidelines on Urban and Territorial Planning, the Geneva Ministerial Declaration on Sustainable Housing and Urban Development, and the Geneva Charter on Sustainable Housing
- Cooperation needs to be transformed into a steady and sustainable process, which can be achieved through “**National policy dialogues for industrial safety**” under the auspices of UNECE
- There is a need to progress with the **implementation of article 7** (and the related annexes V and VI) of the UNECE Industrial Accidents Convention on siting and land-use planning, involving the establishment of:
 - Policies on the siting of new hazardous industrial activities
 - Policies on the significant modifications to existing hazardous industrial activities
 - Policies on significant developments in areas which could potentially be affected by transboundary effects of an industrial accident

⁴ i.e. the UNECE Industrial Accidents Convention (particularly article 7), the Convention on Environmental Assessment in a Transboundary Context, the Protocol on Strategic Environmental Assessment, and the Convention on Access to Information, Public Participation in Decision-making and Access to Justice in Environmental Matters

Such policies should seek to reduce any potential impacts of accidents impact on populations and the environment within the jurisdiction of the country of origin as well as in neighbouring countries

- As article 7 inherently addresses aspects of land-use planning and industrial safety and requires coordinated efforts by the relevant actors, its implementation at the national level was recognized as a natural convener for the possible **establishment of national cooperation platforms** between the relevant authorities
- Strengthening **transboundary cooperation**, through the implementation of article 7 and the notification of existing and proposed hazardous activities to neighbouring or riparian Parties under article 4 of the Convention is crucial. Countries agreed to proceed with the notification of existing and planned hazardous industrial activities, making use of the **Notification Template**,⁵ developed by UNECE, and sharing it with their neighbouring and riparian countries which may be affected in case of an industrial accident
- The clarity of institutional responsibilities and assigned cooperation mechanisms among the authorities responsible for land-use planning and industrial safety is a prerequisite for **coherent policy-making** on the siting of hazardous industrial facilities and industrial accident prevention. Furthermore, coherent policy-making in Eastern Europe and the Caucasus, could be strengthened through:
 - The facilitation of **information exchange and the sharing of good practices** between experts, within and across borders
 - Capacity development and the **provision of policy advice** at the national level
 - Support to the **implementation of regional projects**, fostering transboundary cooperation in the field of land-use planning and industrial safety
- **Developing project proposals** across sectors and possibly countries, in particular under the Strategic Approach of the Industrial Accidents Convention's Assistance and Cooperation Programme is a way forward. Furthermore, the Republic of Moldova and Ukraine expressed the need for the **continuation of the UNECE Project on Hazard and Crisis Management in the Danube Delta**⁶ (which is dependent on funding) under the Assistance and Cooperation Programme, to strengthen transboundary cooperation and industrial accident management along the Danube, involving the Republic of Moldova, Romania and Ukraine.
- Experiences, good practices and lessons learned that were presented at the workshop (including the additional good practices from Belgium (Flanders), France, Kyrgyzstan, Norway and Serbia) should be considered for application (where relevant) in their home countries. The participants expressed interest in the **continuation of information-sharing**, in particular receiving information about good practices by UNECE countries and international experts on this topic
- **Land-use planning and industrial safety** are of direct relevance to the implementation of **the SDGs, the Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction and the New Urban Agenda**. A number of the countries have developed national sustainable development strategies, established national SDG coordination councils, and have taken steps to identify relevant SDG targets in relation to urban development and industrial safety. Further to this "nationalization" of the SDGs, countries could consider **"localizing" the SDGs** in the context of land-use planning, industrial safety and sustainable urban development, involving all stakeholders (civil society, industry, national and local governments, etc)
- Welcoming the **support by donors**, in particular France, for this workshop, further donor support for similar activities on land-use planning and industrial safety in the future should be sought, to enable their implementation.

⁵ Available on the workshop webpage: <http://www.unece.org/environmental-policy/conventions/industrial-accidents/meetings-and-events/industrial-accidents/workshops/2019/sub-regional-workshop-on-land-use-planning-and-industrial-safety-for-eastern-europe-and-the-caucasus/docs.html>

⁶ Information available at: <https://www.unece.org/env/teia/ap/ddp.html>

In light of the experiences, good practices, challenges and needs highlighted at the workshop, UNECE was invited, in cooperation with partners, to provide further support on land-use planning and industrial safety under the Assistance and Cooperation Programme, for example through:

- **Capacity development activities** such as workshops or projects (national or subregional), addressing country needs, pertaining to national-level implementation and transboundary cooperation
- The implementation of “**National policy dialogues on industrial safety**”
- The possible integration of disaster risk reduction and industrial safety elements into the chapter on urban planning in the UNECE “**Country Profiles on Urban Development, Housing and Land Management**”.

Finally, the representative of Kyrgyzstan expressed the need for a **sub-regional workshop** on land-use planning and industrial safety for countries of **Central Asia** and offered to host such an activity. The representative of Serbia confirmed his organization’s willingness to host a sub-regional workshop for countries of **South Eastern Europe** in Belgrade in spring 2020.